

out today, didn't we? I mean, all of our lives are nothing but our stories.

I say this, one of our small business owners said that she was once on public assistance herself. I'm in a line of work where every politician would like you to believe that we were all born in log cabins that we built ourselves. [Laughter] But the truth is, none of us who are here today, who have been fortunate in our lives, got here without somebody giving us a helping hand, without opportunity. I always tell everybody, you know, a couple of different bumps in the road, I could still be home doing wills and deeds in Arkansas in some small office. [Laughter]

We should recognize that we can pass these programs to empower people, but it takes human beings with real commitment, like the employers we have honored today and all the others in this room and all those like them around this country. And then it takes people with the courage to stand up and say, "I'm going to change my life."

You know, this was hard for—a lot of these folks, they had to stand up here and give a little speech in front of the President today. That wasn't easy, right? They did a good job. But as difficult as it was, it was probably harder for some of them to actually stand up and say, "I'm going to change my life." That's harder.

And I'm just telling you, all over this country today there are people just like them who still don't have the lives they have. And we can reach them, too. And if we do it, America will be a better place. We will be closer to the one America of our dreams when we start this new century. We'll have a stronger economy.

And again I say, there are legal changes we need to make; there are investment commitments we need to make in Washington. I hope you'll help us make them. But in the end, it will be the personal marriage of employers and employees that will see us through.

And Rodney, we'll follow your lead. We'll follow the lead of our founding companies. But I ask you all to leave here with a renewed sense of energy and commitment and go out and tell other people about what you have seen and what you have participated in and what we can do. And if you do that, we will finish this job. And we'll hear a lot more of the stories that make our hearts soar.

Thank you, and God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:25 p.m. at the Navy Pier Festival Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Rodney J. Carroll, forum moderator and division manager, Metro Philadelphia Division, and James P. Kelly, chairman and chief executive officer, United Parcel Service.

## Remarks to Heat Relief Volunteers in Chicago

August 3, 1999

Thank you very much. I want to say, first of all, I came here mostly just to say thank you. Thank you to the volunteers, the firefighters, the police officers, the emergency workers.

I am joined by three members of our Cabinet over here: our Secretary of Labor, Alexis Herman, Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater, and Chicago's own, Secretary of Commerce Bill Daley.

Every time I come to Chicago, I get excited. I tell everybody all across America, you know, this is the way cities ought to work. It's a well-organized, beautiful, clean, ever-changing, dynamic city, and one that doesn't run away from its problems but embraces them and tries to

work through them; and that is what I want America to be like.

I know this has been a very difficult time. This heat wave has claimed over 190 lives nationwide. It has been very, very tough. And I just wanted to join the mayor in saying thank you. Normally, you know, when something like this happens, the role of the Federal Government is to declare emergencies, provide help to the farmers or the business people, or extra help to the seniors and others who are vulnerable. And I rarely get an opportunity to go out and see the people who do the work, save the lives, and help people get through the tough times. And so mostly I am here just to tell

you, you've done a great job, and I am profoundly grateful. Thank you.

As we can all see, thankfully the blast-furnace heat has subsided a little bit here in Chicago, and believe it or not, it was a little better in Washington yesterday and today. Over the weekend, it was scorching. But we probably haven't seen the last of the heat for the season. And we know that many low income people in this area and throughout our country are now saddled with energy bills they can't begin to afford. So earlier today I authorized the release of another \$55 million in emergency funding to help them.

The funding will be used in Illinois and eight other States in the Midwest and the South to help people pay for air-conditioning and pay off their high utility bills. About \$16 million will go to the State of Illinois alone. We have now provided \$150 million-plus for cooling assistance this summer across America, and I hope it will be enough.

We know that some of the elderly people who died in this heat wave were people on fixed incomes who were reluctant to turn their air-conditioning on. We know they were afraid they wouldn't be able to pay their bills at the end of the month. So the one news item I would hope would come out of this meeting is that through this announcement the seniors in this area and in any other area that might be hit by this kind of heat wave will know that

there is Federal help available, Congress has set aside the money for this purpose. We know that when heat waves like this come along that are virtually unprecedented there will be people who need to be cool who can't afford to pay the bill.

So turn on the air-conditioner, and if you don't have one, send for a fan or a room unit; send for something that will keep you alive. That is the message we want to come out of here. I want your efforts all to be successful, and I hope that that message will go out across the country today. People should never have to worry in this country about risking their lives because they can't pay their power bills.

Again, let me say, I want to thank you. The executive director of the Chicago Housing Authority, I understand, said recently, there is no substitute for human contact. That's probably a good general rule, but it is certainly true in this case. You have provided that human contact, and the rest of us are very grateful.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:42 p.m. at the Lake Shore Park Pavilion. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago; and Phillip Jackson, chief executive officer, Chicago Housing Authority. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

## Statement on the Death of Willie Morris

*August 3, 1999*

Hillary and I were greatly saddened to learn of the death of our good friend Willie Morris. When I was a senior in college, I was captivated by his wonderful memoir, "North Toward Home." I had the opportunity to visit New York City and meet him, then the remarkably young editor of Harper's magazine, who had started out in a small Southern town not unlike my own and who never lost his fascination with the human condition. In the 1980's, we became

reacquainted, and I have enjoyed his wit, warmth, and wisdom ever since. Willie Morris was not only my friend, he was a national treasure. He had enormous pride in and love for the South, but he also had a passion to right the wrongs of our racial history. He will take his place beside Faulkner and Welty in the pantheon of the South's greatest writers. Our thoughts and prayers go to his wife Joanne, his son David, and his family and friends.